Creating Effective Advertising

Present One Central Proposition

Make sure your ad message supports your objectives. Avoid extraneous ideas that dilute the message. Keep copy clean and clear. Eliminate trivia, such as company history and resist bragging about your company or product without substantiated claims.

Support the Basic Proposition with All Elements of the Ad

The headline and the illustration should reinforce each other while establishing the ad's message. The reader should know at-a-glance what is being advertised. Subheads and copy should then relate to and support the headline and illustration.

Show the Product in Use

Demonstrate your product in a realistic environment and help readers visualize how they could use the product. Avoid static graphics that portray product categories, assortments or lines unless you clearly state why a choice is offered.

Appeal to the Reader's Needs and Self-Interest

Get right to the point of the message. Clearly illustrate what the product or service will do for the reader so interpretation is not necessary. Using a testimonial from someone famous, yet unrelated to your industry, may insult the reader's intelligence and neglect to convey a sales message.

Sell the Merits of the Product/Service

You only have a few seconds to attract readers' attention and they want to know what your product can do for them. It's your ad's job to make readers understand why they should be interested or buy your product/service.

Emphasize Benefits, Not Facts

Facts are static information that only describe what a product or service is. Benefits are dynamic interpretations of what the facts will do for the user. Telling your readers your product is efficient wins only half the battle. Better stated, telling your readers your product can help slash material costs by 45% - now that's getting the point across.

Design the Ad for Easy Reading

Avoid dark backgrounds, reverse type and overprints on tint block. Choose typefaces and sizes on the basis of readability. Copy may be long or short, but it must be organized and well laid out.

Use Humor Carefully

Entertainment is not your primary objective and may not successfully make your sales points. Using humor or a play on words can backfire, resulting in a negative perception of your company, such as tacky or tasteless. Remember: what is humorous to the advertiser may not be funny to the reader and may rob you of being taken seriously.

Repeat a Successful Ad, Drop a Low Scoring Ad

An effective ad does not wear out as fast as the advertiser thinks it does. Frequency reinforces basic selling propositions. It take many runs for the reader to tire of an ad that is of real interest. Conversely, an uninteresting ad will not improve with repetition. Keep track of how your ad creative choices are working – participate in Ad Effectiveness Studies sponsored by your publisher.